A

LETTER

TO THE

COMMON-COUNCIL

OF

LONDON.

[Price One Shilling.]

A LETTER TO THE COMMON-COUNCIL OF *LONDON*, ON THEIR LATE VERY EXTRAORDINARY ADDRESS TO His MAJESTY.

In ſervile nations decency may ſpring,
And teach a rev'rence for the name of King,
But manly glowing inſolence for me,
To mark the brave, and conſecrate the free;
Such as the ſons of *Britain* boaſt alone,
To ſpurn the Prince, and trample on the Throne.

ANONYMOUS.

LONDON,

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A

LETTER, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

THE great reſpect in which, upon many accounts, your body has been held, by the whole kingdom, gives ſuch a general weight to your proceedings, that numbers are apt to make your conduct the ſole guide of their opinions, and to pin their political faith eſpecially, with the moſt implicit credulity, on your ſleeves.—Indeed, upon ſeveral occaſions,

caſions, you have acted with a degree both of good ſenſe and reſolution, which highly merited this univerſal deference from your fellow-ſubjects.—But nevertheleſs, give me leave to ſay, that inſtances are alſo to be produced, where your zeal has been a little untimely and indiſcreet; and in which the private machinations of ſome individual, inſignificant in every reſpect but his ſeat in your aſſembly, has led you into exceſſes which were utterly unjuſtifiable in gentlemen of ſuch general prudence and integrity.

Among other inſtances of this diſagreeable nature, your late addreſs to his Majeſty has been publicly cenſured, and, I am afraid, with two much foundation by every diſpaſſionate man in the kingdom: it has been looked upon as equally unſeaſonable and preſuming, and thought to be no leſs indecent in the manner, than arrogant in the end.—This, gentlemen, you will poſſibly conſider as very free language—but it is not more free than the language which you have made

made uſe of to your King.—If you take liberties with your Monarch, it muſt be ſuppoſed that other people will take liberties with you.—And if you are really deſirous of being treated with politeneſs and regard, learn yourſelves to behave with a neceſſary ſhare of reſpect and humility, where you owe the profoundeſt veneration; nor fly ſo directly in the awful face of your Sovereign, at the very moment you ſolicit for permiſſion to kneel and kiſs his hand.

As I purpoſe to animadvert a little upon this very extraordinary addreſs of yours', gentlemen, I ſhall give the addreſs itſelf, at full length, that you may not ſuppoſe I deſign to take an unfair advantage of your words.—Thus, then, it ſtands, in the *London Gazette* of *Auguſt* the thirty-firſt.

" To the KING's moſt excellent
MAJESTY,

" The humble addreſs of the lord-mayor,
" aldermen, and commons of the city
" of *London*, in common-council aſſem-
" bled.

" Moſt gracious Sovereign,

" WE your Majeſty's ever loyal and
" faithful ſubjects, the lord-mayor,
" aldermen, and commons of the city of
" *London*, in common-council aſſembled,
" humbly beſeech your Majeſty to accept
" our moſt ſincere and dutiful congratula-
" tions, on the ſafe delivery of the Queen,
" and the auſpicious birth of another
" Prince.

" The joyful event of an increaſe in your
" Majeſty's illuſtrious family, will always
" be gratefully conſidered by us as a further

" ſub-

" ſubſtantial ſecurity to the civil and reli-
" gious liberties of this your Majeſty's free
" and native country.

" Every addition to your Majeſty's do-
" meſtic happineſs, fills our hearts with the
" higheſt pleaſure and ſatisfaction; and ful-
" ly confiding that your Majeſty's royal
" ſentiments ever coincide with the united
" wiſhes of your faithful people, we gladly
" embrace every opportunity of teſtifying
" our joy, and laying our congratulations at
" your Majeſty's feet.

" Permit us, therefore, royal Sir, to aſ-
" ſure your Majeſty, that your faithful ci-
" tizens of *London*, from their zealous at-
" tachment to your royal houſe, and the
" true honour and dignity of your crown,
" *whenever a happy eſtabliſhment of public*
" *meaſures ſhall preſent a favourable occa-*
" *ſion, will be ready to exert their utmoſt*
" *abilities, in ſupport of ſuch wiſe councils,*

" *as*

" *as apparently tend to render your Majeſty's*
" *reign happy and glorious.*

" Signed by order of court,

" JAMES HODGES."

In this unfortunate addreſs, gentlemen, there are two circumſtances which ſtrike me pretty ſtrongly; the firſt is, that you poſitively, though indirectly, tell the King, that unleſs his affairs are in a flouriſhing ſituation, [illegible] he is never to expect the ſmalleſt ſupport or aſſiſtance from the city of *London:* truly, a very polite, humble, and affectionate declaration! — One would ſuppoſe that the *more unſettled public meaſures were*, the more readily you would have thought of exerting yourſelves to render his Majeſty's reign both happy and glorious.—The more, I am ſure, it would have done credit to your duty as ſubjects, and to your generoſity as men.—But no—this favour was to be deferred till it was *not* wanted; and his Majeſty was to receive

the

the warmeſt proofs of your attachment, only in proportion as thoſe proofs were utterly unneceſſary, either to promote his glory or his happineſs.

You will poſſibly ſay, gentlemen, that the conſtruction here put upon your words is extremely forced and unjuſt; — but ſurely, you who are acquainted with the moſt ſecret ſprings of government; and are ſo very capable of inſtructing your ſovereign in the moſt important of his affairs, cannot be at a loſs when called upon for the meaning of a ſmall paragraph of your own writing? — Let me appeal to your own underſtandings, and aſk you ſeriouſly, if ſaying: " *Whenever a happy eſtabliſhment of* " *public meaſures ſhall preſent a favourable* " *occaſion, you will be ready to exert your ut-* " *moſt abilities, in ſupport of ſuch wiſe coun-* " *cils, as apparently tend to render his Ma-* " *jeſty's reign happy and glorious,*" is not a tacit declaration, that, *unleſs* this favourable occaſion *was* offered, you would *not* exert thoſe

thoſe wonderful abilities of yours', either for the honour of your Sovereign or the intereſt of your country? Recollect yourſelves a little, gentlemen. — If you underſtand the meaning of your mother tongue, you will find that this delectable ſentence, conſiderably more than inſinuates the implication I have given it. — If you really own yourſelves unacquainted with the import of your native language, it was extremely abſurd to think of writing in it; and the worthy, learned, and elaborate doctor of laws who formed one of your committee in drawing up the addreſs, was not a little negligent in his duty, if he ſuffered it to paſs without a proper animadverſion. — What a pity is it that the univerſity of Oxford, when ſhe gives degrees, cannot alſo inveſt her fortunate favourites with ſome ſmall portion of abilities. — As an honeſt countryman ſaid at ſeeing the tragedy of the Orphan: "What a deal "of miſchief might have been prevented by "a ſimple farthing candle." So ſay I, what a deal of abſurdity might be prevented if people

people poſſeſſed a tollerable ſhare of underſtanding, or turned the little which they do poſſeſs to any tolerable account.

But, gentlemen, as if you had not ſaid enough in this negative declaration, that unleſs public meaſures were happily eſtabliſhed you would not exert yourſelves for the intereſt or glory of your Sovereign: you have thought proper to add, his Majeſty's councils muſt even have an *apparent* happy tendency, before you can conſent to do your duty, as good ſubjects to your King, and good citizens to your country. — Before you inſerted ſo unlucky a paſſage in your Addreſs, you ought modeſtly to have conſidered, whether or no you were proper judges of what had an *apparent* tendency to promote the honour of your Sovereign and the ſecurity of the kingdom. — The very ſame meaſures might, perhaps, in the opinion of the two houſes of Parliament, have an *apparent* tendency to the public good, which you, from motives of intereſt, or ſome peculiar combi-

nation of circumſtances, might poſſibly ſuppoſe had an *apparent* tendency to the public prejudice.

In ſuch a caſe, gentlemen of the common-council, give me leave to aſk; Who is to decide upon the tendency of national meaſures? The two auguſt houſes of Parliament, with all poſſible deference to the dignity of your characters, have a right to, at leaſt, as great a ſhare of credit with the King as the corporation of *London*: and ſuppoſe, only for argument ſake, that he ſhould again do as he has once already done in regard to the Cyder Bill, think it expedient to pay a little more attention to the advice of his Parliaments than to your addreſſes; would you, on ſuch an occaſion, look upon yourſelves as diſcharged from your obligations as *Engliſhmen*; and take upon you to ſay, that neither your King nor your country were entitled to the utmoſt of your ſervices? God forbid! —Raſhly as you have lately acted, that would be a degree of temerity ſtill more culpable, and might

might, in all probability, be attended with conſequences of a very fatal nature to yourſelves. — When I ſpeak of your Sovereign, gentlemen, you muſt not be ſurpriſed, if I alſo occaſionally introduce your country — Their intereſts are eſſentially the ſame ; and there is no ſpeaking of his honour or happineſs in a ſeparate ſenſe from the honour and happineſs of the kingdom.

You ſee, from this ſingle obſervation on the word *apparently*, gentlemen, how dangerous it is for people to ſtep ſo far beyond their proper ſituations, and how liable men are to err where they aim at inſtructing their Prince, and yet ſtand in need of ſo much inſtruction themſelves. — But I do not know how it is, the city of *London*, like our modern herd of poets, of late appear to think, that any language is good enough for their Sovereign — Our ingenious bards, ſo they ſtring together half a dozen compſimentary ſtanzas on the birth of a Prince, never trouble their heads either about the ſenſe or the

application ; any ſort of poetry is well enough for Kings and Queens ; and if the delightful compoſitions are not favourably received at court, why let the court go without congratulations. — In like manner the gentlemen of the common-council, ſo they offer an addreſs, give themſelves no concern whatſoever about the propriety either of the ſentiment or the diction — If it is calculated to pleaſe, good ; if not, why let it go ; they are accuſtomed to ſpeak their minds to their Sovereign ; and he muſt bear the indelicacy of a paragraph that would be thought highly culpable in an advertiſement for the office of Bridge-Maſter, or the ſtill more humble avocation of an Aleconner.

But, gentlemen, abſtracted from the viſible groſſneſs of the paſſage under conſideration, how was it poſſible for the evident unſeaſonableneſs of it to eſcape your notice ? At your own requeſt you were admitted to compliment your Prince on the happy increaſe

creaſe of his family, an increaſe that might be well ſuppoſed to add as much to the ſecurity of his private felicity, as it did to the real ſecurity of your public rights and liberties. — How, then, on an event ſo joyful both to him and to yourſelves, could you dream of diſturbing the mutual ſatisfaction, which ought to have ſubſiſted, with the murmur of diffidence, or the ſarcaſm of inſinuated reproach? Was it not, to the laſt degree, ungenerous and undutiful to go up with an air of tranſport in your countenances to rejoice with your Sovereign, yet carry a ſting at the end of your congratulation, which could not but wound his ſenſibility in the tendereſt part of all, and imbitter every ſhadow of that pleaſure which you affected to give him by your felicitation? — Indeed, gentlemen, you have, upon the preſent occaſion, ſhewn yourſelves as little converſant with the principles of breeding as the ſentiments of duty; and have not more violated that degree of deference which you ought to have preſerved for the character of your

Sovereign

Sovereign as a Monarch, than trampled on that common politeneſs and civility which was his indiſputable claim at your hands as a man.

I know very well that ſeveral of your members, who, though they really bluſh at ſo *en cavilier* a mode of proceeding, nevertheleſs, attempt to palliate the impropriety of inſerting ſuch a paragraph at the end of a congratulatory addreſs, by ſaying, that there was a neceſſity for ſeizing that occaſion to ſpeak about public affairs; becauſe if it was ſuffered to paſs without ſome mention of national meaſures, it might poſſibly be a long time before you had another opportunity to deliver your ſentiments on the ſtate of the kingdom. — For my own part, gentlemen, I cannot ſee how your opinion was at all neceſſary on this occaſion — and am much inclined to think, it would have been more ſenſible, as well as more decent, to have kept your thoughts to yourſelves, than to

have

have expreſſed them in a manner ſo little to the purpoſe.

But even admitting there was a neceſſity for your opinion, yet, ſurely, you cannot be in earneſt when you ſay, that without ſeizing the occaſion which you ſo unfortunately made uſe of, it might be a long time before you would have another opportunity of diſemboguing yourſelves on the affairs of the nation — Surely you cannot be ignorant that the ſubjects of *Great Britain* have at all times a ſpeedy acceſs to the throne; nor be inſenſible that you yourſelves have, upon various exigencies, made uſe of this very acceſs to ſet forth your grievances, and to ſolicit for redreſs — When, in relation to the Cyder Bill, you ſo modeſtly requeſted that his Majeſty would pay a greater ſhare of attention to your remonſtrance than to the joint advice of both his houſes of Parliament, what opportunity did you then wait for to preſent this obliging petition to your Sovereign? — Did you ſtay till the increaſe of his

his family ſupplied a fair occaſion to ſmuggle in your ſolicitation; or did you introduce it by way of tag to any other addreſs? — No, gentlemen, you went boldly up, without ſtaying for the leaſt pretext of a different nature, and proceeding at once to the point, in very direct and earneſt terms you entreated his Majeſty to decline accepting an addition to his revenue, which was thought indiſpenſibly neceſſary by the auguſt council of the kingdom. — This is a recent circumſtance, gentlemen, and ought to have convinced you that there were opportunities enough of approaching the throne without daſhing the cup of joy ſo unſeaſonably with the gall of your reflexions, and hinting that your laws and liberties were in a hazardous ſituation, at the very moment you were expreſſing your thankfulneſs to God and your Sovereign for an additional bulwark to the ſecurity of them both.

I ſhould be very far from condemning you, gentlemen of the common-council, or

any other body of my fellow-ſubjects, for laying a proper remonſtrance before the throne, where-ever you are really aggrieved —But I cannot help being ſurpriſed when I ſee the firſt corporation in the *Britiſh* dominions coming before the crown with a viſible murmur in their addreſs, and yet declining to ſpecify any particular ſubject of complaint.—If you are any way injured or oppreſſed, gentlemen of the common-council, behave with that ſpirit which ſhould always actuate the minds of free-born *Engliſhmen*, and ſet forth your injuries in the full face of your country. — You have a right both to be heard and redreſſed. — It is no leſs your claim as *Britons*, than it is your prerogative as men; and you are happily bleſſed with a Sovereign who has both the ability and the inclination to grant you the neceſſary relief. To expreſs a diſſatisfaction, therefore, without mentioning at what you are diſſatisfied, betrays an equal degree of ignorance and preſumption; and expoſes you to the ſevereſt ridicule, no leſs on

the ſcore of arrogance, than on the want of underſtanding.

To give you, however, the fulleſt ſcope you can poſſibly wiſh, I will grant, that public meaſures, as you have ſagaciouſly hinted, are not upon a happy footing at the preſent criſis.—Yet, how has your complaint the ſmalleſt tendency to ſet them on a better foundation? Perhaps, if other meaſures were to be purſued, his Majeſty would be ſtill unfortunate enough to fail in meeting with your approbation. — Perhaps the very ſteps which he took to ſecure your good opinion, might be the readieſt way of incurring your diſpleaſure; and the utmoſt endeavours which he exerted for the public good, might, to people of your *uncommon* penetration, appear prejudicial to the intereſt of the kingdom. — Tell me really, gentlemen of the common council, in what manner you would wiſh his Majeſty to conduct himſelf. — Though a Prince of the fineſt underſtanding, it is impoſſible he ſhould

come

come at a knowledge of your deſires merely by inſpiration. — You ought, therefore, before you thought proper to find an indirect fault with his behaviour, to tell him in what way he ſhould behave; and to give him ſome little intimation of your pleaſure, before you told him ſo bluntly that you were diſpleaſed.—To prevent ſuch an abſurdity for the time to come, I would have you, at the next previous meeting in *Cheapſide*, prevail upon that prodigy of oratory, and judgment, who cuts ſuch a capital figure in print-ſhops, explaining *Magna-charta* to his little boy; (and who, ſo highly to your honour, directs the principal part of your operations) to draw up a ſet of rules and orders for his Majeſty's uſe, directing what miniſters he ſhall employ, and what meaſures he ſhall adopt—but above all things commanding him to remove a certain right honourable judge for ever from his preſence, for daring to commit this your Bellweather to durance ſome few years ago, notwithſtanding the common-council, *Cicero*, with

all the forcible rhetoric of ſighs and tears, endeavoured to excite his lordſhip's compaſſion, and promiſed to ſhrink into his primeval inſignificance for the future.

The moment you thus eſtabliſh a neceſſary plan for his Majeſty's conduct, all complaints muſt be at end; though, upon recollection, I do not think you can be entirely ſafe without aboliſhing the two houſes of Parliament.—The lords and commons are a determined ſet of people, and may be inclined to call you to an account for this laudable ſelf-aſſumption of extraordinary authority. It would be a dreadful affair indeed, if the uſher of the black rod, or the ſerjeant at arms, was ſent to the *Half-Moon* in *Cheapſide*, with a meſſage to your little oracle, while he was behaving in the moſt diſorderly manner imaginable, to keep the company in order; and calling your chairman, Mr. deputy *Tyſer*, who has been three times as long in the common-council, and has

has fifty-times more underſtanding than himſelf, by the contemptuous appellation of a young gentleman. —

It muſt be owned, indeed, that if the two houſes of Parliament ſhould be induced to take a liberty of this nature with that worthy Wight, a great deal might be ſaid in their favour. — You know very well that on ſeveral occaſions, he has taken many liberties with them, and ſpoken in terms not a little familiar both of their perſons and their proceedings.— Particularly you may remember on a late court-day, when a memorial came in from the Bank relative to a couple of old houſes in Cornhill — how he thundered againſt an application to Parliament, which would have been really uſeful to the city, merely through an impudent reſentment againſt that auguſt aſſembly, for animadverting upon ſome glaring inſtances of preſumption in the behaviour of *his* fellow citizens. — You may alſo remember, that in the courſe of his delicate harangue, where he ſpoke of a miſtake in an act of Parliament, which

rendered

rendered ſuch an application to the legiſlative power neceſſary, he ſaid it was cuſtomary for attornies of character, whenever they committed a miſtake in the management of a client's buſineſs, to take whatever damage the miſtake might occaſion upon themſelves. — To be ſure it ought to be ſo — Yet I muſt aſk this venerable perſonage, notwithſtanding all his knowledge of the law, if there are not ſome exceptions to this general rule, as well as to all other general rules; and I muſt, moreover, aſk him, if the attorney who managed the popular ſide of the queſtion in the affair of Richmond Park ſome years ago, did not commit an error which was extremely expenſive to his clients, without ever offering to take the expence of the blunder upon himſelf? — If he ſhould anſwer me on the affirmative ſide of this queſtion, gentlemen of the common-council, what muſt you think of your own exceſſive indolence in declining to proſecute the intereſt of your honeſt conſtituents, merely through the force of his paltry

little

little arguments? Is the private reſentment of a deſpicable individual, no leſs remarkable for the inflexible obſtinacy of his temper, than the undeviating perverſeneſs of his underſtanding, to lead you into an oppoſition to your own welfare? And are you to ſacrifice the emolument of your fellow citizens, who are entitled to your beſt ſervices, to gratify the inſignificant petulance of an underbred bluſterer, who has no pretenſion to any thing but your inſuperable contempt?

For ſhame, gentlemen of the common-council; If it becomes you to reprehend *your* parliamentary repreſentatives whenever they act in manifeſt contradiction to your wiſhes, it undoubtedly becomes *your* conſtituents to expreſs their diſapprobation whenever *you* behave in a diametrical oppoſition to *their's*. That you have done ſo on the preſent occaſion there is no poſſibility of denying; the univerſal murmur through every order in the city, on account of your addreſs, is an inconteſtible proof that your conduct was highly

highly culpable, and the indignation with which it is every-where mentioned, even by the moſt candid and intelligent, muſt convince the meaneſt citizen within the walls how utterly improper you are to be the repreſentatives of the firſt metropolis in [redacted] Europe: give me leave to ſay, gentlemen, that in the whole of this unfortunate affair you have acted with as much infidelity to your conſtituents, as you have behaved with temerity to your King. — Your conſtituents diſclaim the offenſive part of your addreſs; it is utterly repugnant to their ſentiments; and when you delivered it in as their ſenſe, you violated alike your duty as repreſentatives, and your veracity as men.

Your conſtituents, it is therefore to be hoped, will make a careful enquiry into this proceeding, and diſcover which of you were ſtrenuous to betray their confidence, by adviſing the exceptionable paragraph in your delicate addreſs. — The citizens of *London*, notwitſtanding their choice of ſuch a common-council,

mon-council, are in the general, a ſet of ſenſible well-meaning people, who know very perfectly what belongs both to juſtice and civility, — and they will not, I am perſuaded, on the next St. *Thomas's-day*, give a vote for any one man who has proved himſelf ſo regardleſs, or ſo incapable of his truſt, as to expoſe them at once to the diſpleaſure of their Sovereign, and the univerſal cenſure of the whole kingdom.

Having gone as far as I deſigned through one of the points which ſtruck me in your addreſs, namely, your indirect reſolution not to exert yourſelves in the ſervice of your Sovereign, unleſs public meaſures were upon a footing apparently happy; and having alſo touched upon ſome other circumſtances as they occured, I ſhall now proceed to the ſecond article with which I was affected, upon reading the elegant paragraph in diſpute.

You ſay, gentlemen, in this paragraph, that when public meaſures have an apparent tendency to the happineſs and glory of your Sovereign, you will then exert yourſelves in the ſupport of his Majeſty's councils. — Give me leave to aſk, by what means you are ſenſible that public meaſure have *not now* a tendency to promote theſe deſirable ends? Who informed you that his Majeſty's councils are not, at the preſent moment, wiſe and ſalutary; and in what ſingle inſtance can you tell us, that they are either weak in their nature, or prejudicial in their deſign? What, I ſuppoſe, becauſe your wooden God was not appointed to the Solicitorſhip of the Treaſury, a place that abſolutely requires ſome dawning ideas of common ſenſe and civility, public meaſures muſt be very injudiciouſly carried on! — Undoubtedly — So powerful an advocate for civil and religious liberty would have reflected honour on the firſt offices in government, and the ſame amazing ſleepineſs of argument which ſet us

all

all a yawning in that impenetrable performance the *Monitor*, would have pointed out the errors of every former adminiſtration, and proved the preſent to be the *ne plus ultra* of human perfection.

For my own part, gentlemen, I can ſee nothing whatſoever in the conduct of our new Miniſters that can poſſibly give you a reaſon to complain; unleſs it be the diſregard which they have ſo ſenſibly manifeſted in relation to your formidable Dictator, Maſter *Magna Charta*, — who, though he aſpired to the honour of ranking among the loweſt of their creatures, was thought by much too little a thing to be made a tool; and looked upon, (allow me the ſeeming contradiction) as infinitely too deſpicable even to be deſpiſed.

Alas, gentlemen, from this very circumſtance you ought to entertain a favourable opinion of our new Miniſters. — You might hope, from this inſtance of their good ſenſe,

that they had a real deſign to fill all the public employments with tollerable officers; and expect that a ſet of men, ſome way adequate to the importance of the truſt, would be inveſted with the management of our various national departments. — How unlucky therefore is it, that what you ought to conſider as a matter to their credit, you ſhould pitch upon as an impeachment of their characters; and how ſtrange is it, that you, who know the man ſo thoroughly, ſhould be the only body of people in the kingdom, unthankful to the preſent adminiſtration for ſuffering him to continue in his original nothingneſs and obſcurity. — However, if you ſhould ſtill perſevere in your whimſical opinion of his wonderful abilities, you may have it one time or other in your own power to diſtinguiſh him pretty handſomely. — The agency to your affairs at *Londonderry* is a good twelve or fourteen hundred pounds a year, and would, I am very well informed, be highly acceptable to this very meek and conſiderate gentlemen. — He has more

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than once hinted his expectation of this office to his friends, and expreſſed an ambition of cutting a figure in the *Iriſh* Parliament. In the name of prudence appoint him to this employment the very next vacancy, and you will not only give him the elegant ſubſiſtance which you wiſh him, but, what is of conſiderably greater conſequence to many of your harmleſs brethren, you will ſend him fairly out of the kingdom.

I know very well, gentlemen, that you will ſay, the preſent miniſters are raw and inexperienced—unacquainted with every buſineſs of a public nature, and very little inclined to follow any buſineſs at all—In this opinion you will be ſupported by a ſwarm of little political hornets, who are continually buzzing in the news-papers; and endeavouring to ſting the moſt irreproachable characters, whenever they happen to be appointed to any office in the government.

You

You will poſſibly be informed how *Socrates* once argued with a young fellow, who thought himſelf equal to the firſt employments in the ſtate; and it will, perhaps, be hinted, that before a man can walk a minuet with any tolerable grace, he muſt firſt acquire a little acquaintance with the rudiments of dancing.

I ſhall readily grant, gentlemen, that few people gain a knowledge of public affairs by intuition; and that, of all the ſciences that of government is the moſt difficult to be underſtood.—But, at the ſame time, give me leave to ſay, that the two capital requiſites in the formation of a miniſter are underſtanding and integrity.—A man of ſound judgment, who has a general knowledge of the various ſtates in *Europe*, and who, by being in Parliament a number of years, has gained an intimate acquaintance with the intereſt of his own country, is, at any time, provided

provided his principles may be relied on, a proper perſon for a firſt miniſter, though he never before poſſeſſed a ſingle office under the government. — His good ſenſe will readily point out what is for the intereſt of the nation, and his honeſty will compel him to promote that intereſt by the moſt effectual means. — Should he, at any time, have a doubt of his own judgment, he has a privy-council on purpoſe to aſſiſt him, compoſed of the firſt people, both for conſequence and abilities in the kingdom. — And add to all this, that the public experience of preceding ſtateſmen will afford him the cleareſt lights, in relation to ſuch meaſures as are moſt neceſſary for him, either to proſecute or to avoid.

With theſe helps it is not likely he ſhould err; and if he does but half the good which is in his power, there is no fear whatſoever but he will meet with the univerſal approbation of his country.

Now,

Now, gentlemen of the common-council, notwithſtanding I have acknowledged, that the ſcience of government is a very difficult ſtudy, yet, I flatter myſelf, you will not think the preſent ſet of miniſters ſo extremely improper for their ſeveral offices, when you conſider that the youngeſt of them has been, for years, in all the buſtle of parliamentary buſineſs — and that ſlander herſelf has not hitherto breathed a ſyllable prejudicial to their integrity, or derogatory to their underſtanding. In their miniſterial capacity they have not yet had any opportunity whatſoever of giving the leaſt public offence; and conſequently nothing could be more cruel, or more inequitable, than to brand them without cauſe.

The juſtice, the benevolence, which was due from man to man, gentlemen of the common-council, ſhould have prevented you from ſtigmatizing them with a cenſure till you ſaw they deſerved it; and if you were

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even led to form any opinion of their characters, your candour and generoſity ſhould have told you, that this opinion ought to be favourable. — To be ſure, the public prints have repeatedly informed us, that they were the creatures of the celebrated favourite — but let me tell you, gentlemen, that where the character of a fellow-ſubject is at ſtake, we are not to argue from the whiſpers of hear-ſay, but the teſtimonies of fact.

The plauſible repreſentations of an anonimous ſcribbler, may, now and then, cheat a well-meaning individual into an erroneous belief; but that they ſhould induce the firſt corporation in the *Britiſh* dominions, to go gravely up to their King, and tell him that his miniſters were embroiling his affairs, without having the leaſt foundation in nature for their aſſertion, is ſomething ſo extravagant, and unprecedented, that poſterity will be aſtoniſhed at the bare relation, and gaze with an equal ſurprize, at the un-

accountable mixture, of weakneſs and temerity, which gave birth to ſo extraordinary a proceeding.

Indeed, gentlemen, you will be often liable to errors, if you ſuffer yourſelves to be ſo eaſily directed by any individual in your own body, or any anonimous ſtricture in a news-paper. — Mr. *Arthur Beardmore* will tell you, that many infamous falſhoods are often conveyed to the public eye through thoſe two-penny channels of intelligence; and inform you, that the moſt worthleſs member of the whole community may figure away in a Monitor, or an Evening-Poſt, with all the vehemence of genuine patriotiſm, and weep for his unfortunate country, under the venerable appellation of *Cato*, or *Atticus*.

Take my word for it, gentlemen, public affairs are not in ſo dreadful a ſituation as you imagine; though it may be neceſſary, now

now and then, for a political eſſayiſt to alarm us with the terrors of the national debt, when he wants a new pair of breeches, and expedient for him to take an occaſional ſlice at the miniſtry, when he wiſhes to redeem his other ſhirt from the pawn-broker's.

Upon the whole, gentlemen, your behaviour has been ſo diametrically repugnant to every ſentiment of delicacy and reaſon, that I could wiſh with all my heart to exempt you from the charge of deſign; and to place this unlucky tranſaction entirely to the eaſineſs of your tempers, or the narrowneſs of your underſtandings. — But this is impoſſible. — You ſinned againſt conviction, and refuſed to rectify your error when it was pointed out in full common-council, by two of your moſt ſenſible members, one of them the newly elected *brother*, who ſo ably diſſected your idol, at the previous Meeting, at the *Half Moon*, and Mr. *Patterſon*.

The firſt of theſe gentlemen, in particular, offered you a form of words wholly

unexceptionable, in the room of the unfortunate paragraph which you had drawn up*, and pointed out the monſtrous impropriety of tacking a palpable affront to an addreſs of congratulation. — But no — You wanted to ſay ſomething ſpirited : — and ſomething ſpirited you did ſay, though at the total expence of your decency, your juſtice, and your underſtanding.

Indeed, at the previous meeting, when a particular member was appointed one of the committee to draw up this addreſs — every moderate man in the room was apprehenſive of ſomething uncommonly groſs and vehement. This gentleman had at different times been taken notice of in a judicial way by government, — and it was thought he would, on this occaſion, exert all the frog-like re-

* The form of words which this gentleman ſubmitted to the conſideration of the common-council, gave birth to a Letter on the Addreſs, from a very eminent city officer, which has, within this day or two, appeared in ſeveral of the public papers.

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ſentment of a little mind, to ſwell, with his utmoſt venom, againſt a Miniſtry by whom he had been ſo juſtly treated with contempt. — Unhappily, however, though this circumſtance was foreſeen it could not be prevented; and I have been well aſſured, that was it not for the ſeaſonable remonſtrances of a worthy Proctor in *Doctors'-Commons*, who was of the committee, and is equally diſtinguiſhed for his good ſenſe and politeneſs, the paragraph in queſtion would have appeared in a form infinitely more inſolent; and added a ſtill farther ſhare of obloquy to the preſent diſgrace of the common-council.

Really, gentlemen, you acted very wrong from the beginning, in ſuffering the particular member, whom I hinted at above, to have the ſmalleſt ſhare of concern with an addreſs to his Majeſty. — You were perfectly ſenſible that he was frequently more than ſuſpected of a connexion with ſome periodical papers, in which there were many indecent

indecent reflections on his Majesty and his illustrious family : — The bare nomination of him, therefore, upon an occasion of that kind, carried a positive indelicacy, and would have rendered the congratulation rather disagreeable in the opinion of every body, had you even put your best of sentiments in the best of words.—On the form of your words, however, I shall make no remark, — though that, in more than one instance, is both uncouth and ungrammatical.—It is your meaning alone with which I find fault ; — for though you have no great right to know any thing of a polished period, yet you ought to have been a little acquainted with common sense and civility.

Having now, gentlemen, said all that was upon my mind in relation to your address, I shall conclude this letter with a remark or two upon your body in general ; in order to give the various other corporations of this kingdom a just idea of your consequence, and to prevent them, on this, as well as on

future

future occaſions, from paying too great a regard to your proceedings, through an erroneous opinion of your extraordinary importance.

The corporation of *London*, though the greateſt in the *Britiſh* dominions, on account of it's opulence, is far from being the greateſt, if we confine ourſelves either to the conditions or capacities of it's various members. — The common-council particularly, though they have the principal managment of all the city buſineſs in their hands, are ſeldom compoſed of the principal citizens: — here and there, indeed, we find a man of ſenſe and fortune choſen into the office, but in general, thoſe people who are moſt capable of filling it with real weight, think themſelves conſiderably above it; by this means the employment deſcends to the very loweſt artizans, and a neighbourhood of capital merchants is often repreſented by a man, whom they would on no account condeſcend to be acquainted

acquainted with, nor, perhaps, admit to take an *en paſſant* glaſs in their company.

The little people thus elected into the corporation, are very ſenſible in what light they are held by the ſuperior rank of citizens; and, in order to make themſelves of conſequence, are continually aiming at objects above their reach. — Hence they collect their utmoſt forces; — and, putting themſelves under the command of ſome Leader, whom they look upon to be *clever*, and who has diſtinguiſhed himſelf by a turbulent oppoſition to every thing, right or wrong, which has been propoſed by his betters, they attempt at laſt to regulate the moſt important affairs of the kingdom; exclaim againſt miniſters, ſpeak diſreſpectfully of Parliaments, and dictate to their Sovereign. — Thus, though an addreſs goes up to Court with the really reſpectable name of the city of *London* at the head of it; the ſentiments which it contains are, in fact, no more than the private opinions of fifty or ſixty very inconſider-

conſiderable ſhopkeepers, who conſult about the tendency of national meaſures at the *Half-Moon* tavern in *Cheapſide*, and pay an humble Shilling a head to the maſter of the houſe (a common-councilman alſo, but a deſerving one) for their evening's entertainment. — At preſent their commander in chief is Maſter *Magna Charta*, who is conſtantly ſeconded in the groſſeſt abſurdities by a diſappointed candidate for the office of chamberlain; a wholeſale dealer in lead, both in his profeſſion, and his arguments.

From this little picture of the common-council, which my readers may be aſſured is drawn from the life — the various corporations through the kingdom will ſee how extremely hazardous it is to copy any example ſet them by the *nominal* city of *London*, in regard to the meaſures of government. Formerly, indeed, the common-council of the metropolis were men of real conſequence and ſpirit; they conſulted times and occaſions, and ſcorned to be the dupes of

any individual among themſelves, as much as they diſdained a ſervile complaiſance to arbitrary miniſters. — Hence their determinations were always treated with the greateſt deference; and their ſentiments were uſually conſidered, not only as the ſentiments of their own immediate conſtituents, but as the general thoughts of their whole country. — *But how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath — Publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Aſkelon.*—Alas,

The corporation of *London* are now the ridicule both of the court and the kingdom — and have juſt ſo much importance remaining as to be mentioned with an equal mixture of pity and indignation.

To reſcue the dignity of the city out of ſuch unfortunate hands, there is but one way left, and that is, to eſtabliſh a qualification for a common-council-man. — If no man was to be elected, who could not ſwear himſelf worth three or four thouſand pounds,

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it would induce people of credit to offer themſelves candidates; and the great room at the *Half Moon* would poſſibly be filled with a number of truly eminent citizens.—Till this event ſhall take place, we can expect little beſides inſolence and tumult, vanity and impertinence. — And few reſolutions will take place without affording freſh opportunities to that worthy and upright magiſtrate Sir *Robert Ladbroke*, to exclaim, "*Well, thank God, I had no hand in the* "*proceeding.*"

As, gentlemen of the common-council, I began without ceremony, I ſhall conclude with nothing more than that I am heartily concerned for your conduct, and am, *&c.*

An indignant Liveryman.